<u>Amendments to the Claims</u>

Kindly amend claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8-10, 12, 13, 15-17 & 20, and cancel claims 4, 7, 11, 14, 18 & 19 (without prejudice), as set forth below. All pending claims are reproduced below, with changes in the amended claims shown by underlining (for added matter) and strikethrough/double brackets (for deleted matter).

1. (Currently Amended) A method of assessing a product development ~~project~~ effort comprising:

identifying multiple possible root causes of trouble for a product development ~~project~~ effort;

identifying <u>multiple</u> questions sets for <u>diagnosing</u> the multiple possible root causes of trouble<u>, each question set being directed to diagnosing a respective root cause of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble and identifying specific project role(s) to provide responses to questions of the question set</u>; and

providing a computer-implemented tool to evaluate answers to the question sets and provide guidance <u>based on scored questions</u> regarding existence of one or more root causes of trouble for the product development ~~project~~ <u>effort</u> from the identified multiple possible root causes of trouble<u>, the scored questions being produced by an automated scoring mechanism, the automated scoring mechanism automatically counting the number of responses in required fields of a question set of the multiple question sets and scoring the question set against a total number of required fields in the question set to produce an automatic indication of the strength of responses for the question set, the strength of responses indication being an automatic indication of the strength of analysis of the respective root cause of trouble.</u>

2.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising evaluating project management processes employed for the product development ~~project~~ <u>effort</u> by comparison thereof to identified, standard project management processes, and wherein the computer-implemented tool provides guidance regarding effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development ~~project~~ <u>effort</u>.

3.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising evaluating project management work product of the product development ~~project~~ <u>effort</u> and inputting work product assessment to the computer-implemented tool as further evidence of the existence of the one or more root causes of trouble for the product development ~~project~~ <u>effort</u> or the effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development project.

4.   (Canceled).

5.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising identifying in the computer-implemented tool ~~product development~~ <u>the specific</u> project personnel roles to answer questions of the <u>multiple</u> question sets, wherein the <u>multiple</u> question sets also reside in the computer-implemented tool.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the product development ~~project~~ <u>effort</u> comprises one of a software development project or a hardware development project.

7.   (Canceled).

8. (Currently Amended) A system for assessing a product development project comprising:

a processor comprising a computer-implemented tool comprising means identifying multiple common root causes of trouble for a product development project effort and multiple question sets for diagnosing the multiple common root causes of trouble, each question set being directed to diagnosing a respective root case of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble and identifying specific project role(s) to provide responses to questions of the question set, and wherein the computer-implemented tool further comprises means for evaluating evaluates answers to the question sets and providing provides guidance based on scored questions regarding existence of one or more root causes of trouble for the product development project effort from the identified multiple common root causes of trouble, the scored questions being produced by an automated scoring mechanism, the automated scoring mechanism automatically counting the number of responses in required fields of a question set of the multiple question sets and scoring the question set against a total number of required fields in the question set to produce an automatic indication of the strength of responses for the question set, the strength of responses indication being an automatic indication of the strength of analysis of the respective root cause of trouble.

9. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the computer-implemented tool further comprises means for evaluating project management processes employed for the product development project effort by comparison thereof to identified, standard project management processes, and wherein the computer-implemented tool provides guidance regarding effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development project effort.

10. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 9, wherein the computer-implemented tool further comprises means for evaluating project management work product of the product development project effort as further evidence of the existence of one or more root causes of trouble for the product development project effort or the effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development project effort.

11.   (Canceled).

12.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the computer-implemented tool further comprises means for identifying ~~project development~~ the specific project personnel roles to answer questions of the <u>multiple</u> question sets, wherein the <u>multiple</u> question sets also reside within the computer-implemented tool.

13.   (Currently Amended) The system of claim 8, wherein the product development ~~project~~ <u>effort</u> comprises one of a software development project or a hardware development project.

14.   (Canceled).

15.   (Original) At least one program storage device readable by a ~~machine embodying~~ <u>computer embodying</u> at least one program of instructions executable by the ~~machine~~ <u>computer</u> to perform<u>, when executing on the computer,</u> a method of assessing a product development ~~project effort~~, the method comprising:

identifying multiple possible root causes of trouble for a product development ~~project~~ <u>effort</u>;

identifying <u>multiple</u> question sets for <u>diagnosing</u> the multiple possible root causes of trouble<u>, each question set being directed to diagnosing a respective root cause of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble and identifying specific project role(s) to provide responses to questions of the question set</u>; and

evaluating answers to the question sets and providing guidance <u>based on scored questions</u> regarding existence of one or more root causes of trouble for the product development ~~project~~ <u>effort</u> from the identified multiple possible root causes of trouble<u>, the scored questions being produced by an automated scoring mechanism, the automated scoring mechanism automatically counting the number of responses in required fields of a question set of the multiple question sets and scoring the question set against a total number of required fields in the question set to produce an automatic indication of the strength of responses for the question set, the strength of responses indication being an automatic indication of the strength of analysis of the respective root cause of trouble.</u>

16.   (Currently Amended) The at least one program storage device of claim 15, wherein the method further comprises evaluating project management processes employed for the product development ~~project~~ effort by comparison thereof to identified, standard project management processes, and providing guidance regarding effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development ~~project~~ effort.

17.   (Currently Amended) The at least one program storage device of claim 16, wherein the method further comprises evaluating project management work product of the product development ~~project~~ effort and providing work product assessment as further evidence of the existence one or more root causes of trouble for the product development ~~project~~ effort or the effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development ~~project~~ effort.

18.   (Canceled).

19.   (Canceled).

20.   (Currently Amended) The at least one program storage device of claim 15, wherein the product development ~~project~~ effort comprises a software development project or a hardware development project.

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